

New-York Daily Tribune

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1865.

STEVENS BROTHERS, American Agents for the sale of the *THE TRIBUNE*, in New-York, and for the sale of the *THE TRIBUNE*, in New-York, and for the sale of the *THE TRIBUNE*, in New-York.

To Correspondents.
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NEWS OF THE DAY.

THE WAR.

A letter from the Army of the Potomac, dated the 29th inst., says there is nothing to report except the arrival within our lines of squads of deserters daily, who report the stories of want and demoralization prevailing in the Rebel ranks.

The guerrillas at Athens, Tenn., on the 29th, captured and murdered Major Devine of the Tennessee loyal troops; they also captured Major McGonigley of the Minn. Company. Col. Greaves, of Gen. Steadman's command, has driven the guerrillas out of the country.

The occupation of Salsburgh by our troops is confirmed. The Rebels evacuated that position on the approach of the advance of our forces and retreated to Askepo, where, it is thought, they will make a stand.

The arrival of a portion of the fleet formerly with Admiral Porter, in Charleston Harbor, is noticed in Port Royal papers, and the naval movements in that quarter were giving the enemy no small amount of uneasiness.

GENERAL NEWS.

N. B. Davis, identified at Newark, Ohio, some days since, as keeper of the Andersonville (Ga.) military prison, and who confessed on his arrest being the bearer of dispatches from Richmond to Carro, has been sentenced to be hung on Johnson's Island February 17.

Max Winteritz, a merchant of Newcastle, Pa., was yesterday committed by Justice Dowling in default of \$20,000 bail, on a charge of having fraudulently obtained from Clifton & Co., Importers in Church-st., goods to the amount of \$10,000.

The Alexandria (Va.) Journal says the civil government has been restored on the Eastern shore of Virginia, and that in a few days civil government will be restored in every county where it was suppressed by the actions of Gen. Butler.

Samuel Miller, aged twenty-two years, yesterday committed suicide at his residence, No. 117 Lewis-st., by cutting his throat with a pocket-knife.

A note from Alexandria says ex-Gov. Foote was opposite Point of Rocks on Saturday, intending to cross the Potomac at Berlin.

Gold has been much excited under peace rumors, orders for American stocks from Europe, and consequent low rates for exchange. The opening rate was 21½, followed by a quiet decline to 20½, a rally to 20½, and a sudden return to 20½. The closing rate was 20½. Government stocks are all higher under fresh foreign orders, the new securities fact that no more gold-bearing bonds are to be issued, and no more currency authorized. Stocks are all down again, and sellers are pressing contracts for future delivery.

Last Evening's Stock market after the call. Gold sold up to 20½, as which it stood at the close of the report.

We publish this morning a long list of prisoners who died at Salisbury, North Carolina, from October 18 to December 18, brought by our correspondent, Mr. Richardson, who recently escaped from the prison at that place. As this list, we presume, will be wanted by the friends both of the dead and the living at Salisbury, we shall republish it in our Semi-Weekly of Friday morning.

The Senate of our State yesterday passed the bill authorizing the creation of a State Debt of Thirty Millions of Dollars wherewith to pay bounties of \$300, \$400 and \$600, for one, two and three years' men respectively, to fill the quota of our State under the new draft.

The Express mistakenly says that the Assembly had already passed this bill; we trust that it will hesitate and ponder well ere it does pass it. We do not see how it can be reconciled with a very plain clause of our State Constitution.

Any timid souls who apprehend a Disunion Peace may perhaps take heart when they hear that Fernando Wood yesterday offered in the House the following:

Resolved, That it is the duty of the President to maintain in every constitutional and legal manner the integrity of the American Union, as formed by the Fathers of the Republic, and in no event, and under no circumstances, to prefer or accept negotiations which shall admit, by the remotest implication, the existence of any other Federal or Confederate Government within the Territory of the United States.

—You don't often catch F. W. riding a dead horse—however it may be with B. W.

Objection having been made, our ex-Mayor gave notice that he should offer the above in order next Monday.

We shall probably say less than most of our neighbors concerning the reported departure from Richmond of Messrs. A. H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter and G. W. Smith as Peace Commissioners to Washington. The question is one of days, not results. The report has doubtless a foundation, even if the persons aforesaid have not yet passed Gen. Grant's lines. There will be Peace messages interchanged between the two

cities just named, and there will be Peace—precisely at what time or on what terms, we do not pretend to know. The Gold-gamblers who "sold short" yesterday were not the silly dupes of a baseless rumor, and the return of Peace cannot be distant. We repeat that the new draft has but to be heartily responded to, and the war is substantially over. Probably not one-fifth of the men called for will ever be required to leave their respective States provided the quotas shall be promptly filled.

THE GREAT AMENDMENT.

The U. S. Senate having, on the 8th of April last, initiated, by the decisive majority of 38 to 6, the following Amendment to the Federal Constitution:

ART. XIII.—Sec. 1. Neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, of which the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Sec. 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

The House, after debate, proceeded (June 15th) to vote thereon, and it was lost—Yeas 95; Nays 64—the Constitution requiring an affirmative vote of two-thirds in either House to launch a Constitutional Amendment.

(NOTE.—The real vote was 95 Yeas to 61 Nays—one Yeas having changed to a Nay on purpose to enable him to move a reconsideration.)

Mr. Ashley of Ohio hereupon moved that the above vote be reconsidered; and the issue thus raised, having been passed upon by the People in the late Presidential Election, has been debated at the present Session at much length by some twenty to thirty Members. Finally, after a successful resistance to motions to lay on the table; &c., the House yesterday came to a final vote on the above, having listened to forcible speeches in its favor from Messrs. McAllister and Coffroth of Pennsylvania, and Herrick of this City—all Democrats who had voted against it at the last Session. Mr. Miller of Pennsylvania (who was run out last Fall) spoke against it now. The vote was finally taken, and the Amendment AFFIRMED BY YEAS 119; Nays 56—three more than were necessary in the affirmative. So the Amendment is fully sanctioned by Congress, and now goes to the Legislatures of the States, three-fourths of which must ratify it by a majority vote to render it a part of the Constitution. Its ratification at an early day by the Legislatures of the following States is nearly certain:

MAINE,	INDIANA,
NEW-HAMPSHIRE,	ILLINOIS,
MASSACHUSETTS,	MICHIGAN,
RHODE ISLAND,	WISCONSIN,
CONNECTICUT,	MINNESOTA,
VERMONT,	IOWA,
NEW-YORK,	MISSOURI,
PENNSYLVANIA,	KANSAS,
MARYLAND,	CALIFORNIA,
WEST VIRGINIA,	OREGON,
OHIO,	NEVADA—22.

The Legislatures of the following States are morally certain to vote against it:

NEW-JERSEY,	DELAWARE,
KENTUCKY—3,	

these being the States that voted for McClellan and Pendleton, electing Opposition Legislatures.

The loyal Legislatures of the following States will almost certainly vote Yeas:

TENNESSEE,	ARKANSAS,
LOUISIANA—3,	

and others will doubtless follow in due season. We hope to be enabled to announce, before the close of the current year, that this Amendment is a part of the fundamental law of our country.

This is no time to indulge in exultation, did not the momentous gravity of the subject forbid. But we may be permitted to tender our thanks to those Opposition Members of Congress whose votes have so materially strengthened our hope that we may yet live and die in a free country—one which we may quietly, offensively traverse in every part without fear of exposure to the bludgeons of ruffians or the pistols and dirks of assassins, for no other reason than our wish that all our countrymen might be free. We trust those Members may never have reason to regret this vote.

—We further trust that this result will prove to have contributed essentially to the not distant and complete pacification of our country. A majority of the American People have decided that Slavery shall die, because sore experience has taught them that its perpetration is inconsistent with the integrity and safety of the Republic. They seek for a genuine, lasting Peace; hence they have voted to eradicate that "root of bitterness" which has distracted and nearly ruined her. We will not doubt that those who voted adversely to our convictions sincerely believed theirs the true way to Peace; we will not doubt that these will rejoice with us to see their forebodings dispelled and our hopes realized.

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC!

The House of Representatives having yesterday so nobly followed the lead of the Senate in initiating a Constitutional inhibition of Slavery, may we not hope that the Senate will now second the House in freeing our country from the shackles of Railroad Monopoly? At all events, let us have the Yeas and Nays on the House bill. There can be no need of extended discussion nor of further postponements. Nor should any new measure be permitted to push aside that already matured by the House. Give us the Air-Line too; but let the general

proposition that the Railroads already built may be used by all those whom they will benefit, be first affirmed and established.

OUR GRAVEST PERIL.

We presume no impartial observer will dissent from our belief that the danger to our country's integrity and authority from the Military power of the Slaveholders' Rebellion is no longer appalling. We are quite aware that the Southern Confederacy is a still subsisting fact, and that it is upheld by One Hundred and Fifty Thousand bayonets, two-thirds of them wielded by brave and veteran soldiers. We do not disparage the ability of Lee, Johnston and Longstreet as Generals nor of Beauregard as an engineer, when we state the notorious fact that the strength of the Rebellion is to day very far less than when the lower Mississippi was its main artery, when its flag floated proudly over Norfolk, Newbern, Nashville, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Memphis, Little Rock, Vicksburg, Natchez, Baton Rouge, New-Orleans and Savannah, and when its million square miles of area was permeated by Railroads and Telegraphs which conveyed its armies from Virginia to Texas in a week and flashed its tidings from the Rio Grande to the Potomac in a day. The Confederates have struggled desperately against odds which have nevertheless been steadily augmenting, until they are left but the choice between an early, honorable pacification and an ultimate unconditional overthrow. Upon no basis known to History or to War can they hope to do more than postpone the issue which has become inevitable.

Nor do we regard with much concern the bugbear of Foreign Intervention. We have undoubtedly many ill-wishers in Europe; but our vast Naval armaments, so rapidly created, are decidedly in the way of the realization of their desires. Great Britain will not attack us; and no other Power would care to send its fleet across the Atlantic to try a close hug with a harbor-full of our Dictators and Puritans. France alone might have bothered us two or three years ago; now, the times are bravely altered. We may yet be called to encounter and to baffle hostile machinations from abroad; we are most unlikely to be confronted by hostile broadsides within the few months that the Rebellion may still keep its head above water. Only by feeding Rebel hopes that are certain at length to be blasted are these machinations likely to work us harm.

Our real, serious, ever-present danger is that of Financial collapse and a resulting Military impotence, which, though temporary in its duration, may be permanent in its effects. And this peril seems to us the more formidable that so very few appear to realize or gravely apprehend it.

To-day, One Million Dollars in Coin will buy Two Millions of United States Bonds, payable in coin ten years hence with interest at five per cent per annum. In other words: Whoever will lend our Government One Million Dollars in specie will receive therefor One Hundred Thousand Dollars in coin per annum and Two Millions at the close of ten years—Three Millions in all for a loan of One Million ten years! And we advertise our own want of faith or want of pluck by actually preferring to borrow money at an interest of 7.30 per cent payable in our own Government paper than at 5 per cent payable in solid cash. Is not this the same as saying that we do not expect to see the Rebellion put down this year, or do not mean thereupon to resume specie payment? How can we ask the outside world to have more faith in us than we seem to have in ourselves?

But look at a few subordinate facts: Our Minister of Finance has just been chosen to the Senate, with a general understanding that he prefers a seat in that body to his present most responsible and arduous Cabinet position. We think he has a right to judge for himself in which of the two posts he can best serve his country. But, if, he is to stay in the Cabinet, he should frankly say so, and end all speculation as to his successor; while, if he is to return to the Senate, he should insist on having that successor at once in the Treasury, so that Congress may know what measures of Finance are required of it in the judgment of that functionary. It is madness to let matters drift till the 4th of March, and then be told by a new Secretary of the Treasury that he could have provided the necessary means had he been made Secretary six weeks earlier; but now he must wait till a new Congress can be hastily assembled out of season, after the campaign shall have been well nigh its culmination.

We have a leader of the House of Representatives who honestly believes that Congress may by statute make its irredeemable paper issues, however boundless in volume, equal to Gold, dollar for dollar, and who deems it right and expedient to make it a crime to exchange coin for paper at other than their nominal rates respectively. Of course, he cannot believe that there is any need of retrenchment or economy; since Congress, upon his theory, can at any moment replenish the Treasury by the easy expedient of issuing a Billion more of Greenbacks, and decreeing that they shall be deemed fully equivalent to so much Gold.

We have a Congress wherein the idea of Frugality has no place—wherein the suggestion of Retrenchment is accounted puerile or demagogical. If this were not so, how should the Whisky-gamblers have escaped taxation last Winter? Why should not the Mileage swindle have been arrested? Here come two new Senators from Nevada to serve thirty days in this Congress, and take some \$10,000 each—or over \$300 per day—out of the Treasury therefor. We do not blame them for this; for we presume they will take exactly what the law allows them: we are reproving the law itself, and the maker of the law, which is Congress. A regiment might be paid the money due it for its last six months' service out of this monstrous grab. And, while there is to-day at least One Hundred Millions due to our soldiers for their severe Winter's campaigning, which Mr. Fessenden would gladly pay if he knew where to get the money, we have the House stopping the Deficiency bill to coerce the Senate into adding twenty per cent to the legal compensation of its half-employed and generously paid under-

lings, and a Senator gravely proposing an increase of the pay of Members from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per annum!

Men and brethren! you are fearfully stretching a cord that will snap one of these days and let a good many into the mud. Be entreated to forbear!

We are among those who hold it the simple duty of the good citizen to pay to the uttermost every tax levied to sustain our Government in its fearful trial, and then to lend it all he can spare beside. We scout the idea of Repudiation under any circumstances, and hold him who suggests it as barely less than a traitor. But, though the Nation will never repudiate its Debt, it may properly repudiate those who wastefully, wantonly augment it. And it seems to us the most obvious dictate of even the coldest patriotism to resist every project that would increase public expenditure under existing circumstances. Make frugality the rule in every department of the public service, and we can increase the pay of every soldier, every officer, every functionary, by increasing the value of his stipend through an appreciation of the Currency wherein it is paid him. But to leave the Currency in dilapidation and add Millions on Millions to the Public Debt by increasing salaries and allowances on this hand and on that, what is this but to paralyze the National arm which holds the sword of justice suspended over the Slaveholders' Rebellion by plunging headlong into National Bankruptcy?

"HISTORICUS" ON MR. BENJAMIN.

Mr. Vernon Harcourt is a London barrister, known to the public under the name of "Historicus," as the author of several quite able communications to *The London Times* on points of international law arising in the Trent and Alabama cases. This writer has not attempted to conceal that his sympathies were strongly on the side of the Rebellion—albeit he has argued as a lawyer against the conduct of the British Government in its connivance with the escape of the Alabama. With those sympathies still strong, he has lately written another letter against the Confederate cause, in terms decided enough to show [that his indignation against what he deems a Confederate invasion of British rights a little overbalanced his dislike for the United States. The occasion is afforded by the instructions of the Rebel Secretary of State touching neutral captures by Rebel cruisers. The celebrity of the writer, the prominence given him in the columns of *The Times*, and the change in his tone toward the Confederate authorities, make the letter noteworthy. The intrinsic importance of the subject is considerably less than it would be if the Rebel Navy were not at the bottom of the ocean, or locked up in ports from which there is no escape. Were the case other wise it may be doubted whether the columns of *The Times* would have been open to just such a letter as this.

There is no doubt that Mr. Benjamin's instructions are flagrantly contemptuous of the plainest principles of international law. The concept, however, is for the rights of neutrals, and does not particularly concern us except as it stirs up the wrath of those who, having heretofore granted the Confederates abundant aid, are now moved to upbraid their late allies. A little while ago we should have looked angry where but in *The Times* for such language as this:

"Nevertheless, I doubt if there can anywhere be found an instance in which any community, pretending to the character of a civilized people has ventured upon so open a defiance of justice and of right as which is flung down to the whole world of neutral nations in a document, recently put forth by the Confederate Government. There is certainly nothing worse to be found even in the insane decrees of the French Convention against neutral rights. This Confederate paper is so incredibly insolent in its tone, and so extravagantly foolish in its pretensions, that, were the case, it is a published by 'authority' in *The Index* (the avowed organ of the Confederate Government in this country), I should certainly have taken it for granted that it had been one of those clumsy forgeries which from time to time issue from the American press."

We can afford to forgive Mr. "Historicus" his sneer at us, in consideration of the virals of wrath he pours out on the heads of our adversaries. The cause of it all may be briefly stated. Mr. Benjamin directs in substance that inasmuch as neutrals have closed their ports against Confederate cruisers, they no longer have any rights which Semmes and his comrades are bound to respect. If, therefore, says Mr. Benjamin, any neutral property is seized by a Rebel corsair, as it cannot be sent to any port for delivery to its innocent owners, it must be burned! Mr. Harcourt somewhat needlessly quotes Lord Stowell to prove that in no case has a belligerent the right to destroy neutral property. He justly declares that "a belligerent cruiser who destroys property *prima facie* neutral without adjudication is guilty of an act which in its character is piracy, and in its result is war. Of all the doctrines of the law of nations this is the most fundamental and the least disputed."

"Piracy" is exactly the word, and the only complaint we have to make against the statement of the law by "Historicus" is that he does not yet go far enough; does not avow his conviction that not merely the destruction of "neutral" but of any other property by these lawless rovers of the seas is piracy and ought to be punished as such. But let us rejoice that even in a matter affecting British interests a British writer has cleared the scales from his eyes and seen plainly the character of a Confederate cruiser and the results of her acts.

Mr. Benjamin thus lays down the law:

"The commanders of our national cruisers should be instructed to continue their former practice of allowing the enemy to ransom his vessel in cases where the neutral property on board is small compared with the value of the vessel and cargo, the whole should be destroyed when the price offered is brought into a port of our own or of a neutral country."

Whereupon Mr. Vernon Harcourt comments, with truly British ire:

"That is to say, the question whether neutrals should or should not be wholly dispossessed of their own property, over which the captor has no right, is to depend upon whether the belligerent captain in whose vessel it is freighted chooses or not to ransom the ship, and on the portions which the neutral bears to the belligerent cargo. Was so outrageous a scheme ever so coolly propounded? The logic of Mr. Benjamin comes simply to this: 'Because you don't choose to ask me to surrender I will rob your orchard.'"

That part of Mr. Benjamin's instructions which lies nearest to our interests and those of Great Britain alike, lays down the law for the care of vessels ostensibly neutral, placed under a neutral flag, and furnished with neutral papers. It is well known that many American ships are

sailing in just these circumstances—legally transferred for the time being to foreign owners, the equitable interest remaining in American hands. Mr. Benjamin proposes that each of his pirate captains shall judge of such cases for himself; and

"In these and all other cases, when there is a great and decided preponderance of evidence to show that the vessel is really enemy's property, the cruiser must act on his conviction and treat her as such, leaving to his Government the responsibility of satisfying any neutral claim for her value."

But, says "Historicus," these are the nicest of nice questions. They lie inter apices juris. They "require for their just solution the patient and impartial application of judicial analysis of the highest order." And he summons the aid of his imagination to depict the consequences of Mr. Benjamin's instructions:

"Just conceive a captain of a cruiser (like the Alabama, or the Florida, with a rich prize just captured after an exciting chase, descending into his cabin to consider whether 'any enemy's interest in the vessel remains,' whether she is really 'mortgaged or hypothecated,' or whether the title is so 'absolutely transferred' as to divest the enemy of 'any future interest,' and then having 'satisfied his mind' that there is 'great and decided preponderance of evidence' against the ship, proceeding 'to act on his conviction,' and to turn the vessel and destroy at once the property and the means of proving its title." Thus the Confederate Government really believes that any neutral Government in the world would tolerate such conduct for an instant!

With a still more delicate irony does Mr. Harcourt discuss the soothing alternative which his opponent presents, namely, the satisfaction of neutral claims by the Confederate Government. "In the first place," as Sheridan said, "I don't like the security." And we all know that when an Englishman has said "You can't pay your debts," he has exhausted his powers of invective. Yet Mr. Harcourt goes on to say:

"A man cannot be permitted to enter on a system of lawless plunder simply on the footing of paying the cost. Against such conduct there are more stringent and effective remedies. It is lucky for the Confederate Government that these issues 'instructions' have been issued at a moment when they have no vessel about which could inflict upon its Government the disaster of a capture. But if any future opportunity should arise, I could promise Mr. Benjamin that they would not sail many weeks under such instructions."

And he caps the climax of his satire by quoting a paragraph from Benjamin, and commenting as follows:

"The calm and self-complacent impertinence of this paragraph I think it would be difficult to surpass. If England were the aggressor in doing that which all the rest of the world has likewise thought it proper to do, and recognizes the 'impolicy' of not allowing its ports to be made an office in which the acts of war may be finally consummated by the condemnation and sale of prizes, then, but not till then, the great and magnificent Confederate States of America will consent to give to the unfortunate Great Britain that protection in the jurisdiction of a Prize Court which the law of nations has ordained."

Is it not plain that such language as this in *The Times* but expresses the conviction of that journal that the Rebel cause is a losing one?

EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

Whether Gen. Grant, (or rather Secretary Stanton, under whose orders he acted,) might not well have evinced greater eagerness to effect a general exchange of prisoners of war with the Rebels, we will consider when the facts are all made public; but the Copperhead assumption that any hesitation on their part justifies, or excuses, or at all palliates, the cruelty where-with our men have been treated by their captors, or at all divides the responsibility of their atrocious treatment, is utterly unwarranted. Prisoners of war have often remained unchanged for years—they did so in the long war of Napoleon I. with England—but they were never frozen nor famished, and could not have been without exposing the government which held them to universal execration. It is not always advisable to exchange prisoners—indeed, it would sometimes be madness to do it. The belligerent who has to overcome strength of positions by superiority of numbers may well say, "To exchange fifty to one hundred thousand prisoners of war at this time would strengthen the enemy far more than it would 'me: I will wait.' But we proposed to suggest only, and not discuss this point. What we urge is merely that the alleged hesitation to exchange affords no shadow of excuse for the virtual murder of our captured brothers.

WHAT IS 20 PER CENT?

The Evening Post, as we have repeatedly said, is doubtless honestly wedded to its Free Trade theory, but its arguments therefor can often be reconciled with honesty only at the expense of its understanding. Take the following from its last on the Paper duty:

"The Tribune of this morning tries to make its readers believe that the duty is already a low one. 'How much,' asks that journal, 'is this prohibitory duty? Why not tell that it is just twenty per cent—just one-fifth of value?' We have already told our readers in but a dozen articles that it was twenty per cent, and that this twenty per cent was payable in gold, which more than doubled the duty and sometimes made it fifty per cent—each time the Tribune suppressed it. Whether that is a fair way of conducting the argument, we leave to others to say."

—Now, this, we presume to be ignorance—but what dense, amazing, inconceivable ignorance! "This twenty per cent is payable in Gold." Certainly; but is not the valuation in Gold also? Suppose the duty and the valuation were estimated in Greenbacks, would it not still be twenty per cent, or exactly one-fifth of the value, as now? Suppose the valuation were in Gold and the duty twenty per cent thereon in Greenbacks, then the duty would not be twenty per cent, but (at present) less than ten. It is not possible to make the duty "fifty per cent" under the present tariff, nor any more than twenty, though the premium on Gold were to go up to 300. Why should we be required to prove so simple a truth? And why should not *The Post* let its readers see that we believe Paper is to be cheapened by encouraging our people to erect and stock more Paper-Mills instead of discouraging such investments of capital and labor?

OUR STREETS.

We presume no intelligent person doubts that the Streets of our City might be cleaned and kept clean for less than half the money now paid for keeping them dirty, and that the dirt, garbage, offal, sewerage, &c., might be made to pay half of this reduced cost if it were used to the best advantage. With a contract for ten years, a firm or company might arrange with some of the City Railroads for the running of proper dirt-cars on their tracks, in such manner that the present enormous cost of cartage might be reduced at least three-fourths; while the dirt, sewerage, &c., of our City is richly worth \$1,000,000 per annum, and might be saved at less cost. No other great metropolis has such facilities of access to the surrounding farms and

gardens, as the ocean, bay, sound, rivers and railroads proffer to New-York: Long Island alone could well afford to pay us \$1,000,000 a year for what we now throw away, and grow rapidly rich by the purchase. But then Aldermen, Supervisors, City Inspector, &c., &c., must have their perquisites, and allowances, and grabs; so the City must go dirty while its treasury is plundered, and there seems to be no use in resisting it. We must wait until the income of our real estate is entirely swallowed up by taxation, and then perhaps the Tax-payers will do something. Now, the great mass of them are asleep.

While passengers on the Philadelphia street-cars are voting on the question whether negroes shall be allowed to ride in the same conveyances. When the farce is through, we suggest that the negroes shall vote whether whites be "allowed" the same privilege. Each has the same right to exclude the other, and neither has any right at all.

FROM WASHINGTON.

Special Dispatch to THE N. Y. TRIBUNE.

WASHINGTON, Tuesday, Jan. 31, 1865.

RETALIATION.

The Senate to-day voted retaliation—substantially re-enacted the law of war and of nations in the regard. That's all.

To the Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, Tuesday, Jan. 31, 1865.

THE VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT.

Soon after the passage of the anti-Slavery Constitutional Amendment this afternoon, a slate was fired in honor of that event.

The vote last June, when it was defeated for the want of the requisite two-thirds majority, was: Yeas, 96; nays, 63; absent, 21. Those who at that time voted against the amendment, but who changed their votes and cast them in the affirmative to-day, are Messrs. Baldwin (Mich.), Coffroth, McAllister, Ganson, Harick, Radford, Steele, King, Rollins (Mo.), and Hutchins. Those who were absent on the former occasion, and who now voted yeas, are as follows: Messrs. Brown (W. V.), Davis (Md.), Davis (N. Y.), Grinnell, McBride, Nelson, Pomroy, Randall, Worthington, and Yeman. The following, who were absent, or not voting when the June vote was taken, now voted no: Messrs. Hall, Harris (Md.), Harris (Ill.), Winfield, Ben. Wood and Townsend. Those who voted against the resolution last year and were to-day absent or not voting, are Messrs. Lazen, Leblond, McKinney, Marcy, McDowell and Rogers.

Petroleum in New-York.

Correspondence of THE N. Y. TRIBUNE.

CANADIANA, Jan. 27, 1865.

The rapid increase of wealth consequent upon the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania and elsewhere has naturally turned the attention of people in Central and Western New-York, to the indications of similar deposits which have long been observed in that region. Investigations have been made in the counties of Ontario and Yates which have been satisfactory in the estimation of the parties concerned, and have led to the formation of a number of oil companies, and the commencement of determined efforts to pierce the rocky strata which are supposed to lie above the hidden reservoirs of petroleum.

The existence of boiling and gas springs in the valleys of Mud Creek and West River has long been known, and their origin has been the subject of much speculation among the scientific, and the waters of these streams have from the earliest known period been observed from time to time to be floating upon their surface an oily substance which the Indians were in the habit of collecting for medicinal use, and which has long been known in consequence as Seneca oil. This substance is now known to be the veritable petroleum. The gas which issues in such abundance from the surface of the springs and the fissures in the rocks is of the most inflammable character, and some of the more thrifty farmers have long been in the practice of collecting it, and conveying it in tubs to their houses for illuminating and even culinary purposes. The official surveys of this County show that the calcareous shaly rocks known as the Hamilton Group underlie its whole extent, cropping out at the surface immediately to the south and west of Canadagua, and dipping to the southwest at the rate of about fifty feet to the mile. About five or six miles south and west of Canadagua a stratum of the Seneca shale, about one hundred and fifty feet in thickness, makes its appearance, and is found deposited above the Hamilton shale through Yates County and all the southern portion of Ontario. The Portage Group, consisting of shales, slates and sandstone in alternating layers, is also found, but only on the summits of hills and other elevated spots. In its geological features this district corresponds almost precisely with that portion of Canada West in which petroleum has been found in quantities. In the oil districts of Pennsylvania the shaly and sandstone rocks of the Chemung group are found lying near the surface, these being the next group in order above the Portage. The shales, especially the shaly ones of this region, have always been remarkable for their bituminous odor. The Union Company have the largest and best situated tract of land in the two valleys, but have not yet commenced practical operations.

The oil companies which, under the names of the Ontario, the Union, the Canadagua, &c., have been organized hereabout during the last few months, are comprised mainly of the farmers of the two counties, with a slight infusion of New-York and New-England capital. Drifts are going up along the banks of the two streams, and boring has been commenced in about a dozen different places